

7 June 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Admiral Arleigh Burke telephoned me saying he had just returned from New York where he had been approached by (at least) three important people, presidents of oil and steel companies, seeking his advice on whether or not to lend support to an organization called "Cuban Families Committee for Liberation of Prisoners of War". Each of these men had received letters asking for money, sponsorship, use of name and position in order to approach other firms and individuals for funds in their attempt to raise \$62 million to be used to secure the ransom of; provide food packages, medicine, etc., to; and the ultimate release of all prisoners captured by Castro's forces at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. Admiral Burke stated that backing for this organization is being pushed by certain people who are using the argument that the Administration is behind it; and are using names such as Princess Radziwell and "Pete" Quesada as sponsors. All concerned feel that this is certainly a humane endeavor, but are hesitant to provide backing for a project so like the "Tractors for Prisoners" deal, fearing another failure.

Admiral Burke asked if he could come over in the next few days to see me to get my views on what should be done. I told him that this sort of advice should be sought from the State Department, not me, as it is out of my jurisdiction, and the Agency's, to give advice on Government policy. I did tell him that, although I knew of no official US Government sponsorship and no promise made by the Government to back this outfit, it is, as far as we know, legitimate, has no subversive implications and no security problems. I also told him that we, the Agency, have no connection whatever with this organization.

I suggested that the best thing to do would be to get in touch with either Roger Hilsman, Director of Intelligence and Research, or Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson, and that I felt sure that either one would be able to give him an answer in regard to any Government policy which might exist.



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cc: C/ [redacted]

Exec. Dir.

GENERAL CARTER:

Admiral Arleigh Burke called and said he had a problem which he would like to discuss with you because he needs the advice of CIA. He said he had just returned from New York where he had attended a directors meeting. Several people, important people, he had run into had asked him for his advice on an organization from which they had received correspondence. The organization is called "Cuban Families Committee for Liberation of Prisoners of War". He would appreciate a call from you this evening. His number is

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[redacted]

I called Bill Harvey who provided the following information on the organization.

It was founded by relatives in the US, principally in the Miami area, of the members of the Cuban Brigade captured by Castro's forces at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961.

It is legitimate, has no subversive implications; and no security problems, as far as we know. It is concerned with securing the ransom of, providing food packages, medicine, etc. to; and the ultimate release of all prisoners.

It has worked with, but is not supported by, the CRC. It has no official US Government sponsorship although they have met a number of times with representatives of the Department of State. This is the organization which was basically behind the "Tractors for Prisoners" deal, (and behind the release or ransom of the 60-odd wounded and ill Brigade prisoners who were returned in mid-April.) The organization is now attempting to obtain \$62 million for ransom, food and medicine.

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So far/no Government policy that the US will put up either funds or surplus foods, and it is basically a private organization engaged in a fund-raising campaign on a charity basis to raise money.

We, CIA, have no connection with this organization whatever.